

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 L-03 OMB-01 NSA-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 MMS-03 PRS-01

PA-04 USIA-15 DRC-01 /125 W
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R 181213Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1553

INFO SECDEF

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4395

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH, XO

SUBJECT: THAI INTEREST IN DIEGO GARCIA

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: FBIS D180310Z 18 MAR

1. MENTION OF POSSIBLE B-52 OPERATIONS FROM THAILAND BASES
IN CONNECTION WITH DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PROJECT HAS
REAWAKENED INTEREST HERE IN IMPLICATIONS OF PROJECT.
REPORT OF PENTAGON MARCH 13 BRIEFING WAS PROMINENTLY
HEADLINED "THAI-BASED B-52S MAY FLY INDIAN OCEAN PETROLS",
AND PROMINENT THAI HAVE RAISED SUBJECT WITH AMBASSADOR
IN SOCIAL CONVERSATION INCE.

2. SHARPLY-WORDED NATION EDITORIAL MARCH 18 (FULL TEXT SENT BY
FBIS REFTEL) CHARGES THAT US SUPPORT OF DIEGO GARCIA OUT OF
THAILAND IS "BREACH OF GOOD FAITH." IT ALSO REMINDS READERS AND
RTG OF NEED TO TAKE OFFICIAL POSITION ON THAILAND-
DIEGO GARCIA FLIGHTS IN CONNECTION WITH FORTHCOMING ECAFE CONFERENCE
AT

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CEYLON AND FUTURE MEETING OF INTIAN OCEAN LITTORAL STATES.

3. WE REALIZE SUBJECT CAME UP UNEXPECTEDLY AND BELIEVE DOD SPOKESMAN HANDLED IT WELL. WE ARE PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED THAT HE STRESSED PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFO ON CONTINUKX CONSIDERATION OF USING B-52² FOR SURVEILLANCE OVER INDIAN OCEAN THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL IN RESPONDING TO ANTICIPATED RTG QUERIES, AS WELL AS ANY FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR HANDLING PRESS. ALSO, IN HANDLING FUTURE QUERIES ON THIS AND SIMILAR MATTERS, HOPE STATE AND DOD PRESS SPOKESMEN WILL CONTINUE TO STRESS FACT THAT HYPOTHETICAL SPECULATION ON SUCH MATTERS IS NOT USEFUL AND THAT IN ANY EVENT NO ACTION COULD OR WOULD BE TAKEN WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

4. WE UNDERSTAND RENEWED CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO ARRANGING PRESS VISIT TO DIEGO GARCIA IN NEAR FUTURE, IN RESPONSE TO MANY LONG-STANDING REQUESTS. WHILE WE SEE ADVANTAGES IN DISPELLING MISCONCEPTIONS AND AIR OF MYSTERY SURROUNDING ISLAND BASE, WE WOULD WISH FOR OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW ANY PLAN TO ARRANGE PRESS VIST ORIGINATING OR TRANSITING THAILAND IN LIGHT OF THAI SENSITIVITIES AND STATUS OF OUR CONSULTATION WITH RTG. KINTNER

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